

sons who have apparently possessed the ability to guess cards correctly. There may very possibly be no connection whatever between mental mediumship and this extremely rare card-guessing faculty.

Lastly the writer would like to offer his sincere thanks to all members of the experimental team who co-operated so well over the past two years; not forgetting the mediums who without exception entered cheerfully into the spirit of the tests.

REVIEWS

CHALLENGE OF PSYCHICAL RESEARCH, A PRIMER OF PARAPSYCHOLOGY. By Gardner Murphy with the collaboration of Laura M. Dale. New York, Harper's, 1961. pp. XVIII + 297. \$6.00.

A book on psychical research by Professor Gardner Murphy is an event, as there are exceedingly few persons who combine an equal knowledge of the facts with an equal ability to discuss their theoretical implications. The book is welcome in itself, and doubly welcome as the forerunner of a larger work by him on the same subject. It is the twenty-sixth volume in the series 'World Perspectives' in which many authors of international repute deal with religion, philosophy, politics, science and art.

Professor Murphy who dedicates his book 'In gratitude to Frederic W. H. Myers, Eleanor Mildred Sidgwick, Walter Franklin Prince', disclaims any intention to survey the whole field, or 'to instill opinions in the reader', his aim being to show him what he believes to be serious classes of evidence for various kinds of psychic phenomena, and to explain why he believes 'that there are various challenges to be met by serious reflection.' He very truly says that the serious literature, consisting in the main of periodicals in several languages, of which those published by our own Society and the A.S.P.R. may be taken as examples, is hardly known at all, and he hints that the thoughtful inquirer gets little help from the ordinary organs of publicity.

His own exposition of serious evidence starts with the citation in reasonably full detail and the critical examination of a number of 'Spontaneous Cases' relating to veridical experiences, dreams, apparitions etc. of the kinds first systematically discussed in *Phantasms of the Living* (1886). The cases come from various sources. One is from *Phantasms*; the others are more recent, including three collected by the A.S.P.R. in its investigation parallel to

that recently conducted by our Society, two 'exceptionally vivid' and possibly precognitive dreams of Walter Prince, and a dream reported to Dr Ehrenwald by a patient whom he was analysing. In the three A.S.P.R. cases we are given the benefit of the questions put and the answers received by Mrs Dale in following them up.

Of the experiences described only one is a realistic vision seen by a waking percipient. This is perhaps the most challenging type, and it may be that Professor Murphy intends to illustrate it more copiously in the larger book which we eagerly await. Of the remaining cases four are dreams, one, the case from *Phantasms*, a tactile experience causing the percipient to wake up with a start, and one the hearing of the 'agent's' voice when the percipient was engaged on housework, and later the hearing of another, unidentified, voice during the night.

In a general way dreams are inferior to waking experiences as evidence for psi for several reasons. One is their frequency, which allows more scope for fortuitous coincidence between experience and event, and another that they are more likely to be mis-remembered. These weaknesses however do not greatly affect dreams of the exceptionally vivid type. But there remains the difficulty of symbolism. In Walter Prince's very curious dream of the severed head which continued to show activity, the argument for a significant connection with the suicide, intended at the time of the dream and occurring soon after, of a woman who laid her neck on a railway line, believing that her head when cut off would have a life of its own, depends largely on the prominence throughout his dream of hands and the fact that the woman's name was Hand. There were in the dream several other correspondences with the facts of the suicide but apart from the hands-Hand correspondence the case for a paranormal explanation does not seem to me cogent.

The chapter on Spontaneous Cases is followed by four on Experimental ESP and Psychokinesis discussion of which I gladly leave in the very capable hands of Dr West, and pass to the two concluding chapters entitled 'Survival' and 'An Interpretation'.

As regards survival he describes the material he proposes to discuss as follows:

'Within the space available we shall try to give evidence from three types of paranormal events: (1) Spontaneous telepathic and clairvoyant events happening to ordinary persons, in which there is a suggestion of post-mortem action or commerce of the deceased with the living; (2) mediumistic phenomena; (3) the complex technical

developments which carry the mediumistic studies to the challenging, perhaps insoluble, complexities known as "Cross-correspondences".

As an example of the first type he quotes the case (*Proc.* 3. 95-98) of a percipient who dreamt 'but with no vagueness as in common dreams' of a former employee, Robert Mackenzie, appearing to him and with urgency protesting that he was innocent of the charge made against him. Asked by the percipient what this charge was, Mackenzie replied 'Ye'll sune ken'. The order of events is important. The death occurred on a Saturday night, when Mackenzie drank poison in mistake for whisky. The manager of the factory where he worked learnt of the death on Monday, and wrote that day to the percipient a letter which he received on Tuesday, very shortly after the 'dream', saying it was a case of suicide. On Tuesday the manager learnt that the death was accidental and wrote the percipient a letter to that effect, received by him on Wednesday.

Mrs Sidgwick discussing the case in *Proceedings* says (3. 98) says:

'The coincidence is certainly curious, though it might, of course, have been stronger. It would be very interesting to know—though at this length of time [10 or 12 years] impossible, I fear, to ascertain,—whether at the time of the dream it was known to any living man that Mackenzie had not committed suicide.'

If anyone had that knowledge at that time it might be argued that the information in the dream came telepathically from that person, and was dramatized by the percipient's subconscious as a vision of and message from the dead man. A similar difficulty arises in many of the cases of 'phantasms' conveying information of things that have happened since the death of the apparent agent.

In discussing mediumship Professor Murphy lays special emphasis on the book-tests obtained through Mrs Leonard, which are some of the most baffling phenomena in psychical research. He quotes fully the remarkable test received by Mrs Talbot (*Proc.* 31. 253-60). As with several other book-tests chance-coincidence is not a reasonable explanation. Such cases *could* be explained by an ingenious combination of paranormal activity by living persons but only on the supposition of a *modus operandi* so roundabout and complex as to be barely credible.

It is the third type of evidence, the cross-correspondences, that Professor Murphy discusses most fully. In speaking of their 'challenging, perhaps insoluble complexities', he is not overstating the case. With these he associates the 'literary puzzles' characteristic of Mrs Willett's mediumship. Of the three cases

he quotes, 'Hope, Star and Browning' (*Proc.* 22), 'Lethe' (*Proc.* 24) and the 'Ear of Dionysius' (*Proc.* 29), the second is of a mixed type. The two mediums concerned in it were Mrs Piper and Mrs Willett, each acting independently of the other, and elements of correspondence between them are observable. But each in answer to the question 'What does the word Lethe suggest to you?' produced a string of references, the one to Ovid and the other to Vergil, that it is hard to attribute to their limited classical knowledge, but which would have been within the knowledge of the ostensible communicator, Frederic Myers. Ovid, it may be added, was a particularly good shot, as Myers had an admiration for that poet not generally shared by his contemporaries, in England at any rate. If the complexities of this kind of evidence remain 'perhaps insoluble', Professor Murphy has at least gone far to make them intelligible.

Summing up this section of his book Professor Murphy states with emphasis that recent developments in many branches of science make 'the conception of an independent soul recede more and more into the land of the utterly incredible and unimaginable', and that with some forcing even the cases he has quoted are not completely unambiguous evidence for survival, but that, struggle though he may 'as a psychologist, for forty-five years, to find a "naturalistic" and "normal" way of handling the material', he cannot do it. 'To me the evidence cannot be by-passed, nor, on the other hand can conviction be achieved . . . We need far more evidence; we need new perspective; perhaps we need more courageous minds'.

In his concluding chapter, 'An Interpretation', Professor Murphy deals briefly with the difficulty of establishing with certainty the sort of facts with which psychical research deals, and then proceeds to raise the questions of the psychological motives and conditions conducive to the occurrence of psi phenomena, and of what is the basic difference between normal and paranormal processes. I should in particular like to call attention to the paragraphs (pp. 282-4) in which he discusses frankly the difficulties created for the psychical researcher, not so much by deliberate fraud, as by the carelessness, bias, self-deception of other researchers. He says:

'This issue about what to do with incompetent and unethical procedures, both in general psychology and in parapsychology, has worried me considerably for some twenty-five years, and I do not pretend to see the light clearly.'

W. H. SALTER

This book, written by a distinguished scientist of great experience in the field, amply fulfills the promise of the subtitle and provides the most up to date and valuable primer on the subject that has so far appeared. Unlike so many popular surveys, which merely titillate the appetite with dramatic high-lights from investigations, usually selected to support the author's particular point of view about phenomena, this book gives full extracts from the original reports, thereby enabling the reader to appreciate the true status of the evidence.

This primer will prove interesting to experienced parapsychologists as well as to newcomers. We should all be interested to note which cases and which experiments Murphy selects as representative of the various aspects of the subject. Those of us who come close to immediate controversial issues, or are preoccupied with the pros and cons of some particular piece of research, are apt to lose sight of the total picture and to be too much swayed in our opinions by results of the moment. This primer is a powerful corrective. One of the most helpful features is the sense of proportion it conveys. Regardless of topic, and regardless of whether the evidence under consideration is experimental, anecdotal or theoretical, Murphy manages to preserve a balanced judgment, at once open to new ideas yet fully aware of gaps in the evidence or flaws in the conduct of research. The result is an excellent, impartial summary of the evidence for and about psychical phenomena that is free of propaganda on behalf of any particular philosophy or cult. One can well believe the sincerity of the statement that reads: (p. 284) 'I attempt to give the reader a sense of the difficulties, and of the relative conclusiveness or inconclusiveness of the scientific effort in psychical research, and he will reach his own conclusions.' He calls attention to the work done in the belief that it is at least worthy of being further pursued. The most that he is prepared to obtrude in the way of personal conviction is a brief statement in the final chapter: (p. 289) 'the areas noted by the psychical researcher are marked here and there with what appears to be facts, which are at least capable of gradually improved analysis and authentication'.

Although an acknowledged expert in experimental techniques, Dr Murphy shows a sensitive and lively appreciation of field studies and observations that are not yet susceptible to laboratory control. His unified approach exposes the nonsensical fallacy that parapsychology consists of two separate subjects, either the qualitative or the statistical, either case studies or experiments. In practice one approach makes no sense without the other.

Anecdotes have no values unless they lead to new ideas that can be verified by scientific experiment. Numbers in this context have no interest unless they relate to humanly meaningful phenomena. Either approach has dangers if pursued in isolation. The collection of testimony to incredible events, or the game of guessing cards and juggling with the scores, have some fatal fascination and may come to be carried on as ends in themselves. Murphy never loses sight of the purpose of both case studies and experiments, namely the attempt to discover laws and principles underlying as yet unexplained phenomena, and in this task he uses information from all available sources.

Turning now to the section of the book dealing with experimental work in ESP and PK, which is the somewhat artificial division relegated to the present reviewer, one notes the inclusion of six major investigations. (1) The Pearce-Pratt distance ESP tests. (2) Schmeidler's work on the effect of belief or scepticism upon ESP scoring. (3) The Anderson-White clairvoyance tests with schoolchildren. (4) The precognitive scores in the Soal-Goldney experiments with Shackleton. (5) Laura Dale's PK experiments at the American S.P.R. (6) The Forwald tests of 'PK placement', in which dice were rolled down a chute and willed to come to rest on one side or the other of a dividing line.

In researches (1) and (4) the scoring rates were so high as scarcely to require statistics to demonstrate their significance—though statistics were very useful in the discovery of secondary effects and variations in scoring. The only plausible alternative to an ESP interpretation seems to be deliberate fraud. Murphy comments (p. 81) 'We must, in raising these questions, remind ourselves that no scientist claiming unusual results can ever ask for immunity from such charges. If independent repetition were available of most of the major effects, the difficulty would not arise.'

In the other ESP experiments quoted, more especially perhaps in the Schmeidler work (2), relatively low scoring rates and the necessity for different groupings of results before significance becomes apparent allows scope for some statistical controversy. On this Dr Murphy makes the following interesting statement: (p. 99) '... my own feeling ... is that knockdown proof is not available by any statistical method, no matter how refined, and the main problem is to get experimental ideas in a form to permit ultimate repeatability ...'

It seems clear that Dr Murphy regards non-repeatability as the great stumbling block, the one unfortunate peculiarity that sets ESP experiments apart from other scientific work, hampers fur-

ther discovery, and prevents public acceptance of the importance of this research. At various times in the past it has looked as if a 'break through' had occurred and the goal of repeatability been virtually achieved. The S.P.R. pioneers working with Mrs Piper must surely have thought so, although they would not have expressed it in these terms. J. B. Rhine, in the first flush of his success with card calling tests, and Whately Carington, impressed by the results of ESP tests with a mass of unselected subjects guessing at the content of target drawings, both thought at one time that they had something repeatable. The Schneidler method of dividing subjects into above chance and below chance scorers according to their attitude to the experiment seemed at one time to promise a means whereby any experimenter might be able to extract significance from the scores of unselected groups of people. The Anderson-White technique, using school-children as subjects and their class teachers as testers, and dividing the results according to teacher-pupil attitudes, offers, in Dr Murphy's opinion (p. 122) 'a pretty good promise of repeatability'. Once again, however, the rejoicing seems to have been premature. In a footnote on the same page Murphy adds that, at the proof reading stage, three further unsuccessful attempts at replication have come to his attention.

The inclusion of the PK researches, (5) and (6), may serve to revive some interest in dice throwing. The results of the Forwald tests (summarized in the table on p. 180) draw attention to the apparent dependence of PK scores upon which particular observers are present. In such tests the identity of the effective PK agent may not always be obvious. Dr Murphy comments that there is now too much evidence on record in favour of PK to warrant a 'wait and see' attitude that might have been justified when Rhine first brought up the matter. It seems, however, that 'the repeatable PK experiment is even harder to find than the repeatable ESP experiment' (p. 181).

D. J. WEST

GESCHICHTE DER PARAPSYCHOLOGIE. Buch I von A. Ludwig, stark umgearbeitet von Rudolf Tischner. Buch II von R. Tischner. Tittmoning, W. Pustet, 1960.

This book consists of two parts. The first is a second edition of the first section of the *Geschichte der okkultischen Forschung* (Pfullingen, 1922) by A. Ludwig largely revised and re-written by Dr Tischner and the second is a new edition of the former second section of the same work originally written by Tischner.